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### **REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks.

There is no additional fee for this Amendment because the total number of claims has not changed and the total number of independent claims is not more than three. If any fee is determined to be necessary, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account 19-3550.

### **Election/Restriction**

Claims 23 and 49 are expected to be rejoined, as linking Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

### **Information Disclosure Statement**

An Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) was filed with the USPTO by Applicants on 23 January 2007. The Examiner confirmed by telephone that the IDS was not in the USPTO records. The Examiner instructed the undersigned to resubmit the IDS with proof of filing, and the IDS would be considered. Applicants have enclosed a copy of the IDS mailed on 23 January 2007, along with a copy of a USPTO-stamped return receipt postcard evidencing receipt in the USPTO. The non-U.S. Patent reference cited in the IDS is also enclosed.

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Applicants note the International Search Report indicates the references cited in the IDS are Category "A" documents and not particularly relevant. Applicants believe these prior art references will not affect the allowable subject matter indicated in the Office Action. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if any issue remains.

#### **Amendment to Claims**

Claim 1 has been amended to include limitations of dependent Claim 34, which the Office Action indicates contains allowable subject matter. Claim 34 has been canceled. Claim 44, which the Office Action indicates also contains allowable subject matter, has been amended into independent form. Claim 8 has been amended to depend on Claim 44 in view of amended Claim 1. Claim 9 has been amended to depend from Claim 7 in view of amended Claim 8. Other claims have been amended in response to the claim objections in the Office Action or to correct typographical errors. New Claim 55 has been added, and finds support in original Claim 2.

#### **Claim Objections**

The above Amendment renders moot the objections to Claims 13-28, 38-42, 44, 45, and 52 by providing proper dependency and/or antecedent basis for claim elements.

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### **Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102**

The rejection of Claims 1-4, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 45-48, 50, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Thompson et al., U.S. Patent 5,640,659, is rendered moot by the above Amendment. Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include limitations of dependent Claim 34, which the Office Action indicates contains allowable subject matter.

### **Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103**

The rejections of Claims 5-7, 31, 37-43, and 51-53 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al., U.S. Patent 5,640,659, in view of Mitani, U.S. Patent 5,216,466, Sugimoto et al., U.S. Patent 4,802,659, Waterschoot, U.S. Patent 6,539,197, Diamond et al., U.S. Patent 3,817,103, or Watannabe, U.S. Patent 6,397,030, are rendered moot by the above Amendment.

Claims 5-7, 31, 37-43, and 51-53 depend from amended Claim 1, and are thus patentable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

### **Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicants thank the Examiner for his efforts in determining Claims 8-22, 24-28, 34, and 44 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended

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to include limitations of dependent Claim 34, and Claim 44 has been amended into independent form. All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

### **Conclusion**

Applicants believe that the above Amendment and remarks address each and every issue raised by the Examiner and overcome each and every objection and rejection. However, should the Examiner detect any remaining issue, Applicants kindly request the Examiner to contact the undersigned by telephone, in an effort to expedite examination of this Patent Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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